

stated in my original review, lost in admiration. For his critical powers of evaluating evidence I am still as critical as before. However, in dismissing Dr. Hollander and his theories, I may quote paragraph 41 of the British Medical Association's Special Committee's Report on Mental Deficiency just published. That Committee, after as careful an investigation of the evidence as even Dr. Hollander could require, says:

"It may be accepted that birth injury is a cause of mental deficiency in a certain number of cases, and that it is an inferential cause in a somewhat larger number, but any claim that birth injury is the *cause* of the defect should be examined with critical care," and that, after all, is all I have asked Dr. Hollander to do.

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## "Preventive Medicine"

### *To the Editor, Eugenics Review*

SIR,—In the article, "Preventive Medicine," in your January issue, Dr. C. P. Blacker refers to the "German Marriage Advice Bureaux." It may interest your readers to learn that the original scheme for the formation of such bureaux came from our own country.

In giving evidence before the Royal Commission on Divorce and Matrimonial Causes, 1909, the present writer urged that the question of marriage should not be left in the hands of priests and lawyers, but that medical men should also have a voice in the matter. It was further advanced as a principle of vital importance that every marriage should be considered from the standpoint of the production of sane and healthy offspring.

In my evidence before the Commission (see Vol. III of Report, p. 109) is the following passage: "I would suggest to parents and guardians the prudence of requiring a certificate of fitness of a candidate for marriage from the point of view of the spouse on the one hand and of prospective children on the other. . . . I would also suggest the organization of advisory marriage bureaux, where all persons contemplating matrimony could obtain *gratis* and full investigation of their family and personal history, and secure advice as to the advisability or otherwise of the proposed marriage."

A few years later a paragraph in a London newspaper described a German marriage bureau. After a passing note of exclamation *re* the Teutonic enterprise I dismissed the matter from my mind. But now, twenty years or so later, one may perhaps be pardoned for making a mild protest, lest the oversight should become hopelessly stereotyped.

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## Eugenics and Socialism

### *To the Editor, Eugenics Review*

SIR,—In the Society's Annual Report for 1931-2 it is stated, quite rightly, that those Labour Members of Parliament who opposed the granting of leave to introduce the Sterilization Bill on July 21st, 1931, "were doubtless influenced by the contention of Dr. H. Morgan, who opposed the Bill, that the measure involved anti-working-class legislation." Dr. Morgan did comment on the "audacity" of Major Church, "a Labour Member rising from these benches to advocate anti-working-class legislation," and made sundry hints at the class issue before finally denouncing the Bill as "pagan, anti-democratic, anti-Christian." But contrary to the impression which might be conveyed by the bare statement of the *Society's* Report, Dr. Morgan was not making the sort of unreasoned speech which is popular with most politicians of all parties at an election. He did, in fact, make several points unconnected with the class issue: these may be read in the Official Commons Report (5th Series, Vol. 255, 1249 ff.); here I am only concerned with his evidence for those statements which "doubtless influenced" many Labour Members, though not Sir Charles Trevelyan, Miss Ellen Wilkinson, Dr. Somerville Hastings, and others. This evidence is summarized in the following three sentences from Dr. Morgan's argument; "At the bottom, mental deficiency is an economic problem"; "Heredity, still an unknown and exaggerated bogey of humanity, has been foisted on the world as the main cause of mental deficiency"; "There is nothing wrong with the germ plasm itself." Dr. Morgan's contention is thus that the arguments for the influence of heredity are unsatisfactory.

This position seems to me untenable, but equally untenable seems the position of those eugenicists who, practically speaking, ignore environment; though those may profess pity for other human beings condemned to enjoy the amenities of London below bridges or the Rhondda or East Lancashire, they do not in their political capacity (for reasons which need not here be discussed) consider that it is at all possible to adopt a ruthless slum clearance policy.

The argument from the "Jardins Ungemach" is two-edged: that experiment does show the advantage of good heredity, but it also shows the advantage of good surroundings; would it have received so much enthusiastic applause if it had been conducted in a Strasbourg slum?

The heredity-environment controversy is a Hegelian triad; first, the strict opponents of heredity; secondly, the equally strict opponents of environment; thirdly, those who support a synthesis of the other two views. There is no more effective way of driving most working-class